

Carolina country



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INSIDE:

The co-op business model

The 1968 ice storm

Smart thermostats

All about electric space heaters—page 30

FREE... and Then Some!

Exclusive Jewelry Offer: **FREE*** DiamondAura® Anjou Pendant and a Bonus Gift

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A spectacular symbol of love. Nothing is more important than making a great first impression. That's why we created in the labs our DiamondAura Anjou Pendant. One of jewelry's most distinctive cuts, this pear shape absolutely explodes with brilliant light.

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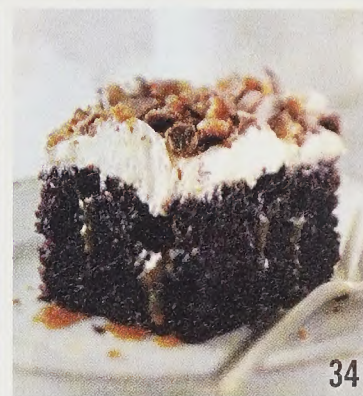


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ON THE COVER

"Icefall." A look at Dry Falls in Nantahala National Forest near Highlands, Macon County, after the coldest day of 2015. "Ice forms cathedral-like sculptures underneath the falls when the temps get this low during winter," says photographer Charles Johnson, a member of Haywood EMC. Note the fence along the path that allows you to walk underneath the waterfall. charlesjohnsonfineart.org



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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to nearly 900,000 homes and businesses. The 26 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

Why Do We Send You Carolina Country Magazine?

Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

Your co-op's board of directors authorizes a subscription to Carolina Country on behalf of the membership at a cost of less than \$5 per year.

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SOY INK Soy ink is naturally low in VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and its usage can reduce emissions causing air pollution.

Happy trails

By Michael E.C. Gery

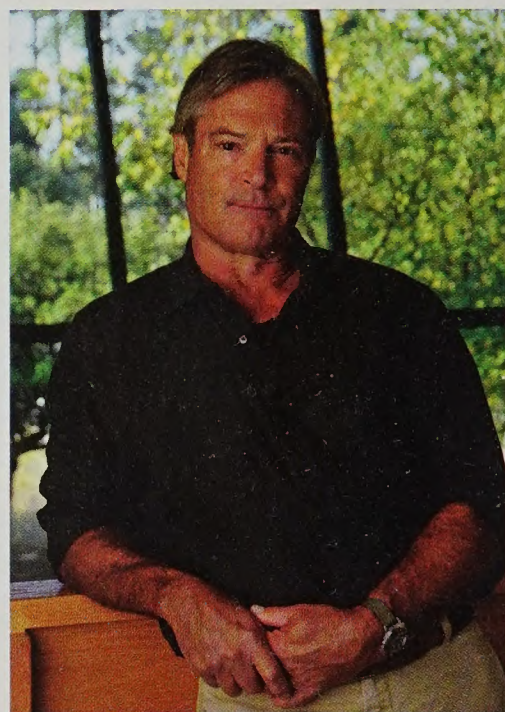
This month marks 24 years since I first wore the cloak of Carolina Country. My first day here was Martin Luther King Day 1992.

I had been paddling along in Stumpy Point, mainland Dare County, writing as a freelance, taking odd jobs, running a wheelbarrow for an archeological dig, shooting pictures for a real estate publication, turning into a beach bum. I began following this magazine each month, sent to me as a member of my electric cooperative, Tideland EMC. As any freelancer does when expenses are running higher than income, I pitched myself to Owen Bishop, Carolina Country's editor at the time.

And the rest is history. It's a history of my admiration for the beauty and promise of North Carolina. It brought me the pride and satisfaction of working in a cooperative business, where members matter, communities come first and profits are shared.

As editor of Carolina Country, I have roamed rural North Carolina from Sugar Cove Gap to Sugar Loaf Island, from Clay County to Currituck County, from Mount Airy to Airlee Gardens, from Big Butt Mountain to Little Pee Dee River, from High Falls and High Rock to Low Gap and Lowland.

Along the way, of course, I met far too many amazing people to recall here. A former truck driver in Randolph County hosted huge Christmas gatherings twice a year for people with mental and physical disabilities. A Tuscarora daughter in Robeson County provided shelter and job training for the community's homeless and those whose records prohibited them from finding jobs. A teacher and students in Beaufort County sold doughnuts outside Food Lion to raise money for an overnight trip to New York City. A shop teacher in Bertie County inspired economically underprivileged students to design and build projects for their community. Teachers in Greene County helped all their students become the first in their families to graduate from high school



and go to college. Electric utility linemen from Haywood County volunteered to install reliable electric power to a dungeon-like eastern European orphanage that housed deformed children victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Electric cooperatives supported all this work.

The first thing that North Carolina's electric cooperatives did collectively was to form a statewide association in 1945 and hire a job safety and training supervisor. The second thing they did was to form an Education and Public Relations Committee and adopt a monthly magazine to communicate with members. Today, electric cooperatives throughout the U.S. publish similar magazines for their members. We carry on a proud and important tradition of informing members about the business of their cooperatives, and of supporting progress within their communities. At Carolina Country, we've tried to make that a helpful and lively experience.

January 15, a few days before Martin Luther King Day, will be my last day on the job. I can think of Dr. King's well-known sermon on humility and gratitude: "We never get anywhere in this world without the forces of history and individual persons in the background helping us to get there." I was well guided on my trail during the past 24 years by family, friends and comrades. They know who they are. And I know who they are.

Thank you all for everything. ①

Policies and people

In the December issue ["Viewpoint"], Wally Emerson stated in effect that he would be willing to pay more taxes to support wind energy. While I applaud his motives, we must remember that those of us on fixed incomes may not have that luxury.

We also need to think of all the jobs lost because of the closing of the coal mines. Take a trip to Kentucky, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, among other states, to see the devastating economic loss the current rules are causing. Once-proud people are reduced to poverty. Many have exhausted all unemployment benefits and are not even listed as unemployed because of this.

Robert Helton, EnergyUnited

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC services

You are to be commended for producing an excellent magazine for the membership. It is further indication of the excellent service the electric cooperatives are providing.

As a member of Blue Ridge Mountain Electric for the past decade or so, I have been extremely pleased with the service. The service people have been very thoughtful and pleasant. The new facility in Young Harris, Ga., is an indication of vision, good taste and beauty. I predict that the critics will be happy for this decision a decade from now.

At age 92, I have had the privilege of living from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This is the best electric service I have encountered.

*William H. Rose, Murphy
Blue Ridge Mountain EMC*

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December sunset

A December sunset on Bogue Sound looking from the shoreline behind the Pizza Inn in Morehead City. I love the calm water except for the wake from the duck swimming by.

We own a condo in Indian Beach and still call North Carolina home, even though we moved from Williamston six years ago.

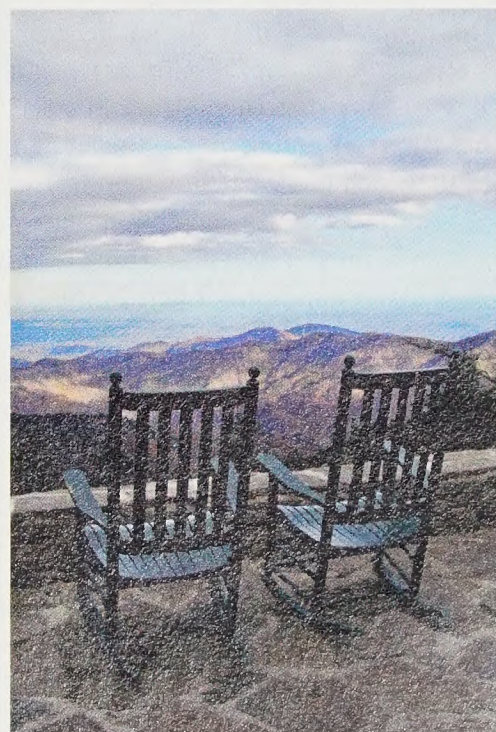
Doug West, Evans, Ga., Carteret-Craven Electric



Iron Mountain

This is my uncle in a log truck, taken in November on Iron Mountain in Buladean, Mitchell County.

Megan Vess, Marion, Rutherford EMC



Marnie and I were here

The rocking chair view of the world from Mount Mitchell.

Vickie Rosbach, Rutherfordon, Rutherford EMC

The miracle of Anna

By Steva Roark Allgood

In April 2014, I began my first adventure with chickens when I bought three Dominique biddies and a small coop.

All went smoothly for about five months, until one morning Anna did not come up for breakfast. After a search, I found her crushed under the ladder in her coop with the ladder's top brackets embedded in her head right above her left eye. She was barely breathing. After removing the ladder, I carefully removed the bracket from her head and applied some antibiotic cream on the bleeding wound that was bruised blue, yellow, green and red. I carried her gently to the tool house where I had filled a pillow case with straw, placed it in a wicker basket, and set her on it. She was so weak she did not even move.

She didn't understand what I was doing and, I am sure, she was in immense pain. But Anna did not give up. For over a week she stayed in the basket. I fed her three times a day with an eyedropper of food mixed with water. Once she caught on to this, she started eating on her own a bit more each day and slowly grew stronger. Talking seemed to calm her. I believed Anna would make it, so she got her own special coop.

By the fourth week, I felt that Anna was ready to run about in her fenced area. Huge mistake! She ran head-on into a big tree and then into the fence. She was scared to death, which made catching her difficult.

I realized that Anna was blind in her left eye and possibly had some mental issues. Learning to run in a straight line was a major triumph for her. To this day, she cannot fly, but hops and runs.

Every day, we sit and "talk" to each other for at least an hour. She follows me to the barn and around the yard and loves to rearrange my flowers. She spreads the plants from the flower beds onto the brick patio. A year ago, I would never have believed that I would enjoy watching a chicken destroy my flower beds on a daily basis. And she loves to take a major dust bath in one of the unused horse stalls. Today, she is happy and content and the love of my life.

I am constantly amazed at Anna's courage, strength, stamina, unfailing trust, and her determination to live. She never wavered and has been an inspiration to me in dealing with my husband's illnesses. I hope she forgives me for any mistakes I may have made. Because of her and with her, I have learned many valuable lessons. I thank God for the miracle of Anna. 🐔

Steva Roark Allgood is a farmer in Randolph County and a member of Randolph EMC.



Send Your Story

If you have a story for "Where Life Takes Us," about an inspiring person who is helping others today, or about your own journey, send it to us with pictures.

- We will pay \$100 for those we can publish.
- Send about 400 words.
- Pictures must be high resolution or good quality prints.
- Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you want anything returned.
- We retain reprint rights.
- Tell us your name, mailing address, and the name of your electric cooperative.
- To submit: email to editor@carolinacountry.com ("Inspiration" in the subject line) or online at carolinacountry.com/contact

To some, sunglasses are a fashion accessory...

But When Driving, These Sunglasses May Save Your Life!

Drivers' Alert: Driving in fall and winter can expose you to the most dangerous glare... do you know how to protect yourself?

In the fall and winter, the sun is lower in the sky so it rises and sets at peak travel periods. During the early morning and afternoon rush hours many drivers find themselves temporarily blinded while driving directly into the glare of the sun. Deadly accidents are regularly caused by such blinding glare with danger arising from reflected light off another vehicle or snowy and icy pavement. Yet, motorists struggle on despite being blinded by the sun's glare that can cause countless accidents every year.

Not all sunglasses are created equal. Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist.

Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to help protect human eyesight from the harmful effects of

solar radiation light. This superior lens technology was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

The Only Sunglass Technology Certified by the Space Foundation for UV and Blue-Light Eye Protection.

Eagle Eyes® features the most advanced eye protection technology ever created. The TriLenium® Lens Technology offers triple-filter polarization to block 99.9% UVA and UVB—plus the added benefit of blue-light eye protection. Eagle Eyes® is the only optic technology that has earned official recognition from the Space Certification Program for this remarkable technology. Now, that's proven science-based protection.

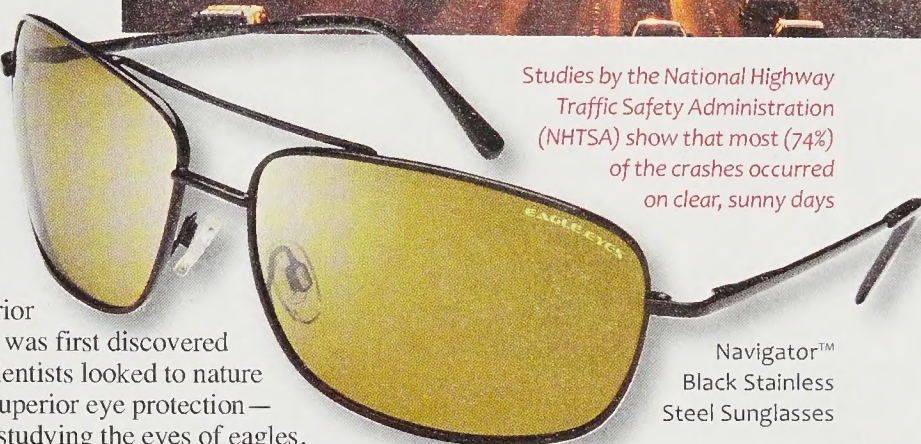
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Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you are not astounded with the Eagle Eyes® technology, enjoying clearer, sharper and more glare-free vision, simply return one pair within 60 days for a full refund of the purchase price. The other pair is yours to keep. No one else has such confidence in their optic technology. Don't leave your eyes in the hands of fashion designers, entrust them to the best scientific minds



Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that most (74%) of the crashes occurred on clear, sunny days



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Former congressman Mike McIntyre, a friend to electric cooperatives.

Electric cooperatives celebrate congressional careers

Representatives of electric cooperatives serving southeastern North Carolina gathered at Brunswick EMC in Shallotte in November to honor former U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre.

During his 18 years as the representative for North Carolina's 7th congressional district, McIntyre was a consummate friend to electric

cooperatives. In recognition of this service, the cooperatives awarded Rep. McIntyre the President's Award this year.

Former Congressman Howard Coble, who represented North Carolina's 6th congressional district from 1985–2015 and passed away in November, also received the President's Award from the cooperatives this year.

The regional grid is ready for winter

The nation's largest grid operator says good preparation and mild weather ought to be enough to get customers in 13 states through the winter.

PJM Interconnection, the regional transmission operator that oversees the electric transmission system from Pennsylvania south to North Carolina and west to Illinois, said it expects to have 177,628 megawatts of power available this winter, well above the forecasted demand of 131,720 MW.

Demand for power in winter 2014–15 topped out at 143,295 MW, about 8 percent higher than PJM expects this year. Federal forecasters say most of the country is expected to see milder weather in the coming months, with the number of heating-degree days falling by about 10 percent in some of PJM's territory.

PJM has put new procedures into place to avoid a repeat of winter 2013–2014, when more than 20 percent of generation was idled because of extreme weather. "PJM has taken many steps to reinforce generator readiness and to continue to improve coordination with natural gas pipelines, a key source for a large portion of the generation fleet," said Michael Kormos, executive vice president and chief operations officer of Valley Forge, Pa.-based PJM.

Among steps it is taking this year:

- Studying the impact of higher load levels and higher generator outage rates;
- Improving communication between natural gas and electric utility industries; and
- Making winter generation testing available to units that had not run prior to November on either primary or alternate fuel.

—Steven Johnson, ECT.coop



UNC football head coach Larry Fedora was among the visitors to the NC Jaycee Burn Center in Chapel Hill.

UNC-Chapel Hill football coach and players raise spirits and awareness for the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center

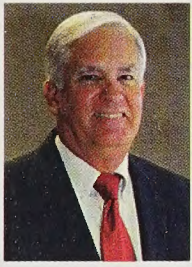
Helping survivors find their place in the world, teaching children to prevent burns, advancing scientific knowledge of burn treatment—these are all things the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center does in addition to saving lives and providing compassionate care to patients.

North Carolina's electric cooperatives, whose linemen face dangers on the job every day, have supported the essential work of the Burn Center in Chapel Hill for more than 40 years. In total, the electric cooperatives have given more than \$1 million.

Beyond financial support, the co-ops facilitate an uplifting visit by UNC athletes to patients at the Burn Center each year. More than 30 athletes and Tar Heel football coach Larry Fedora took part in the visit earlier this month. This visit was captured on video and shown at a UNC football game and on social media to raise awareness of the world-class Burn Center.

See the video at carolinacountry.com.

Jones-Onslow EMC names Jeff Clark to succeed Ron McElheney as CEO



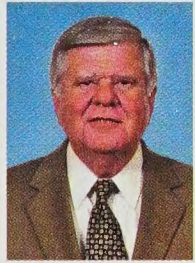
Jeff Clark

After a 45-year distinguished career at Jones-Onslow EMC, J. Ronald McElheney retired at the end of 2015. McElheney began work with the Jacksonville-based cooperative as its director of member services and in 1988 became general manager then CEO. During his time at the helm, JOEMC doubled the size of its membership to 70,000.

Known for his acute attention to members and as a visionary in both the electric utility industry and the local community, McElheney twice received national recognition: for dedication to youth

and education programs, and for advocating affordable electricity for consumers.

The JOEMC board of directors named Jeffrey T. "Jeff" Clark as CEO to succeed McElheney. Clark came to Jones-Onslow in 2000 and most recently served as chief financial officer. He began his career in 1974 with a Florida electric cooperative, then worked in finance at Four County EMC in Burgaw before moving to JOEMC. He and his wife, April, have four children and live in the Swansboro community.



Rob McElheney

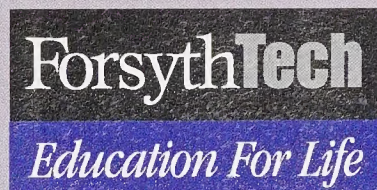


Electric Lineman Training at Forsyth Tech

The Electric Lineman Academy at Forsyth Technical Community College was designed in cooperation with industry to train entry-level electrical lineworkers for positions with private and public utility companies and related employers. Students learn academic and field skills for both overhead and underground line installation and repair, as well as track hoe, bucket and line truck operation and climbing skills. Safety is stressed in every aspect of the job.

The nine-week program includes 288 hours of classroom and field training emphasizing hands-on experience. The program is nationally certified by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), with pre-apprentice credit through the N.C. Department of Commerce. Graduates also receive flagger, OSHA 10 and first aid/CPR certification.

Sponsored by



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Electric cooperatives inspire students at Northeast Ag Expo

Approximately 1,300 high school students in November learned about the opportunities and economic impact of North Carolina agriculture—and local electric cooperatives—at the 2015 Northeast Ag Expo.

Students from seven counties attended the Williamston event to learn how the farming industry is changing and about the many agriculture-related employment options that exist.

Staff at Tideland EMC and Edgecombe-Martin County EMC attended the expo to share information with students about electric cooperatives. Both co-ops, along with Roanoke Electric Cooperative, served as event sponsors.

Employees from Four County EMC captured attention with hot line demonstrations, and Tideland EMC debuted its new "selfie station."

*See Tideland EMC's video of the selfie station
at carolinacountry.com.*

How good are electric co-ops? Ask Wall Street

Independent analysts see strengths in the co-op business model

By Paul Wesslund

Electric co-ops are good businesses. Just ask an executive of the hard-nosed Wall Street credit research group Fitch Ratings. Dennis Pidherny, managing director and head of public power, said last year, "The hallmark of the electric co-op sector has been its financial strength and stability."

"It's a business model that works," says Mel Coleman, president of the board for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The business model Coleman refers to is a utility owned by the same people who buy its electricity. As a not-for-profit business, all of a co-op's resources go to keep prices low and quality of service high.

"We have financial targets to meet to stay in business, but we're not driven by the need for excessive profits or stock value," Coleman says. "The reason we're in business is all about member satisfaction in the price they pay and the quality of the product they get."

Co-ops are financially strong

A leading expert on co-op financing is Sheldon Petersen, CEO of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC). CFC is itself a co-op, created by and owned by electric co-ops across the country to raise money on their behalf. Building electric lines and power plants is enormously expensive, and CFC currently has more than \$21 billion in loans to electric co-ops.

When a co-op needs an expensive power plant or transmission line, it will look for outside financing, including Wall Street firms looking for safe places to put money from pension funds,

mutual funds and other investors. And when those investors look at electric co-ops as places to get a safe return on their money, they like what they see.

Petersen agrees that "the co-op model is a real strength" for raising money from investors.

"Our business motivation is different," Petersen says, comparing co-ops to investor-owned utilities.

WHO WE ARE*

We turn the lights on. We are we, not I or they. We are members. We are owners. We are parents, siblings, grandparents and cousins. We see the opportunity in supporting one another. And all those within our communities. We are family. We leverage generation. We learn from the past. **We power the future.** We are adaptable. We love what we do. We play well with others. We love to laugh. **We never miss a chance to express gratitude.** We know local matters. We are built for you. We are built by you. We generate community together. We give back. We give often. We never stop imagining what a good life takes and gives back. We invest in the environment because we rely on the environment. We must. We invest in our children's children. **We believe in a better tomorrow.** We are driven by connection. We embrace the work and the joy of daily life. We operate on principle. We offer value. We are yours. We are yours to own. We always have been. We always will be. We see good things happen every day. We are people helping people. We remove barriers. We don't create them. We are limitless. **We get the job done.** We dare to be different. We are on time. We are timeless. We honor the individual. We celebrate the collective. We are many members. We are one force. We are one vision. We are building a better world.

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"Our objectives are not to maximize the rate of return, our objectives are to minimize costs to the members. That's very positive for us and leads to competitiveness."

Petersen cites additional characteristics that make electric co-ops strong and reliable businesses that investors like: they provide an essential service everyone wants; they face limited

“Once a consumer understands a cooperative, they are 78 percent more likely to choose a cooperative business over a conventional business.”

—CCA Global Partners Research, April 2015


competition, which avoids some of the disruptions and unpredictability of other industries; and compared with other types of utilities, they serve a much higher proportion of residences, which can provide a more consistent customer base than other businesses.

Petersen says investors view co-ops as “a stable industry that can withstand a lot of the stress in business cycles.”

And the Wall Street investment rating firms back that up by regularly giving co-ops strong ratings of “A” and “AA”.

A 2015 report from Standard & Poor’s Rating Services praised co-ops as an industry that over the years has made good business decisions on such

major issues as environmental regulation and electricity deregulation. That report said, “Over the years, these utilities have withstood many challenges, including costs of complying with emissions controls, adapting to restructured wholesale markets and dealing with the economy’s effects on ratemaking flexibility.”

And a 2014 Fitch Ratings report that declared electric co-ops “fundamentally sound,” said, “Almost a century after the passage of the Rural Electrification Act, the sector remains largely true to its core mission of providing low-cost, reliable electric service to its member-owners.” 

*Cooperatives for a Better World

CCA Global Partners, founded by Howard Brodsky, is dedicated to teaching the world about the benefits of cooperative businesses. At its Building a Better World website, CCA Global Partners says its goal is “to spread the word about cooperatives to employees, members and the unaffiliated public. By spreading understanding and awareness, we feel we can increase usages of cooperatives, respect for cooperatives and help cooperatives recruit talented employees. An increased affinity for the cooperative business model will help to build a better world for everyone.”

For more information, go to buildingabetterworldnow.coop

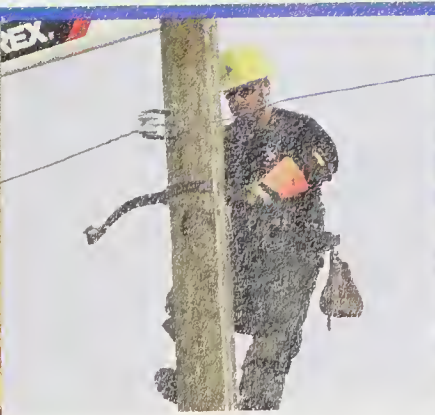
See a video at carolinacountry.com.

Paul Wesslund writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

WHAT WALL STREET INVESTORS LIKE ABOUT ELECTRIC CO-OPS



Top Wall Street ratings firms give electric co-ops high marks for their strength and stability. While no one can invest in an electric co-op—it’s a not-for-profit, member owned utility—co-ops do turn to Wall Street to help finance expensive projects like power plants and transmission lines. Investors pay favorable rates for that financing because they’ve learned to trust the electric co-op industry’s business model as a safe place to get good returns on their money.



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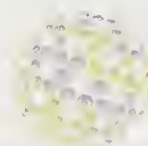
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THE LIGHTS WERE OUT

in Ellerbe and Derby

Working the January 1968
ice storm in the Sandhills

By J.A. Bolton

In 1966, I had finished high school and taken a nine-month electrical lineman course at Central Carolina Technical College. I landed an apprentice lineman job at our local electric cooperative, Pee Dee EMC. The work was sometimes hard and dangerous, but I seemed satisfied with my new job at the cooperative. Little did I know what lay ahead the following year.

On Jan. 9, 1968, it was a cold and cloudy day. A cold rain started to fall but people just went about their business as usual. As evening fell, the temperature started to fall and the rain turned into freezing rain and snow.

The next morning, Scotland, Richmond and the surrounding counties in the Sandhills of North Carolina and South Carolina looked like a winter wonderland. This would be the beginning of the worst ice storm to hit our region in modern times.

The next day, freezing rain was still falling, forming an even thicker blanket of ice on the trees and power lines. Schools had closed, but most businesses remained open even though the roads were real slick.

As Jan. 11 came, more freezing rain and snow was falling and the weatherman was predicting more to come. People were urged to stay off the highways. The calls of power outages began to pick up and the power companies

knew that a real emergency was imminent. Calls went out for more linemen to assist the already overwhelmed local power companies.

Suddenly, through the night of Jan. 11, loud noises and cracking sounds could be heard all over the Sandhills as trees and limbs gave way under the heavy coat of ice. Power poles and lines snapped, causing transformers to explode. Even the steel towers that carried transmission lines succumbed to the weight of the ice.

Live electrical wires were flashing blue fire all over the countryside. Power and telephone service was blacked out in most of the Sandhills. Before it would be over, a small army of 2,000 linemen would work around-the-clock trying to restore the power.

As the storm went on, the weight of the snow and ice brought down roofs on large chicken houses and warehouses. Why, the landscape looked like a war zone with

I learned right quick that ice forms on one side of the pole and that's the side you have to climb while holding on to the other side.

trees, power poles and twisted metal laying everywhere.

Electrical power had been brought to about every town and rural area of the country by the 1940s. People's lifestyles were set up around the energy of electrical power. They used it for heating, cooking and to run their industries, and they weren't prepared for such a long power outage as was upon them. Lucky for some, they still had their fireplaces, candles and kerosene lamps. The old-type kerosene space heaters were in short supply at the hardware stores, and more were ordered every day.

After about a week without power, people had to clean out their refrigerators, and those who had small generators were kept busy recharging freezers for people. Several weeks passed before some people got their power back on.

The power companies were stretched thin, and crews were working 12- to 16-hour shifts under very cold and dangerous conditions.

Being a young lineman, I had never climbed icy poles. I learned right quick that ice forms on one side of the pole and that's the side you have to climb while holding on to the other side.

It was about a week into the storm, and the Pee Dee EMC power crew I worked with was working north of Ellerbe around Derby. The ice had wiped out all the power to the houses in the neighborhood. Our crew had worked all day and part of the night trying to get new poles and lines up. All that was left for them to have power was to connect it all to a live—or what we called “hot”—line.

I was tired and cold as I made my way up the 30-foot pole to connect the hot wire. With each lineman's hook firmly placed in the pole, I climbed just about to the top and buckled myself off. Then I let down a rope to the ground man, and he tied onto that rope an extendible fiberglass stick with a hook on the end.

With my rubber gloves on, I lifted the stick and got into position to make the connection of the copper clamp to the overhanging wire. My hands were so cold and shaking that I missed the connection and a blue flame shot out into the night. Still shaking and not being able to see well, I tried again but I still missed.

I told the ground man in not-so-good words to hold the light steady. I tried and failed again!

I had always known the power of prayer in my life. I also knew if I was going to get these people's power back on, it would have to be with the Lord's help. I bowed my head while hanging on that icy pole that night, and me and the Lord we had ourselves a little talk.

The foreman hollered up and said, “Boy, are you going to sleep up there?”

No, I wasn't sleeping. Just praying.

After praying, I extended my arms with a firm grip on the fiberglass stick, and I made the hot wire connection. Nightlights and porch lights came on everywhere. Why, it was one of the prettiest sights this ol' country boy had ever seen as the lights glistened off the ice. It looked like the stars in Heaven lighting up a dark world.

My simple prayer had been answered. Derby had power again, but I want you to know that after that storm, this ol' boy found himself another line of work. ❶

J.A. Bolton is a member of the N.C. Storytelling Guild, Richmond County and Anson County writers clubs, Richmond County Historical Society, and the Story Spinners in Laurinburg. He grew up in Richmond County and learned storytelling at the country stores, on local farms, and from men who knew how to hunt and fish and “tell stories about the biggest fish or their favorite dogs.”



Storyteller J.A. Bolton says, “History and stories keep the past alive. Please stop me on the street or give me a call at 910-997-4658 if you have one to tell me.”

CAROLINA COUNTRY
scenes
Photo of the month



Buster and Yogi in snow

This was taken after an unusual snowfall for my area in Evergreen, Columbus County. Anyone who knows my two dogs knows they are never still. But while I was out taking photos in the snow, they both sat like this next to my pond as if I had asked them to pose. The black lab is Buster and my other is Yogi.

Jean Britt, Evergreen, Brunswick EMC

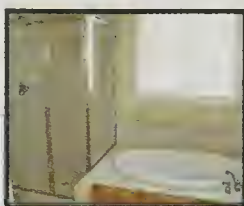
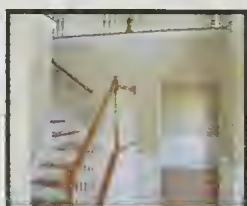
The Photo of the Month comes from those that scored an honorable mention from the judges in our 2015 photo contest ("Carolina Country Scenes," February 2015). See even more at the Photo of the Week on our website carolinacountry.com.



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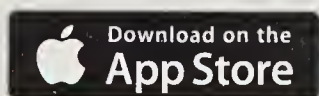


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North Carolina's
Electric Cooperative
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Buying your first home

Steps to take on your path to ownership

By Allison Goldberg

The path to owning your own home can be a daunting process that seems filled with uncertainty and obstacles, particularly for first-timers. Here are a few important steps that can help you along the way.

Know your overall readiness to buy

Why do you want to buy a home? If you merely feel you “should,” you may want to postpone buying one. Is renting less expensive than a mortgage? Are your job and location stable? Selling a home within only a few years can prove costly; it can take years to recoup the fixed costs associated with the process.

Assess your financial readiness

Know how much you have saved and if it is enough to cover upfront purchase costs, including a down payment, inspection, appraisal and closing costs. Make sure these costs do not deplete your savings because you should have an emergency fund for unexpected home repairs or other urgent situations.

Also, determine how much of your monthly income you can spend on your mortgage payment and insurance while also setting aside money to pay for annual property taxes. The rule of thumb used by mortgage lenders: don’t spend more than 28 percent of your gross monthly income on these costs known as PITI (principal, interest, taxes and insurance).

Pull your free credit reports from the three credit bureaus, and fix any errors. Try to avoid opening new lines of credit

or making large purchases in the months leading up to pre-approval and closing on your new home; either could negatively affect your score, which the lender must check again before closing.

Look for first-time homebuyer incentives from the federal and state governments, as well as local non-profits aimed at helping people buy their first homes. Such programs may offer down payment assistance, interest rate subsidies or help with closing costs.

Speak with several banks, credit unions and mortgage brokers to compare fees and mortgage rates. Once you have selected a lender, work with it to get preapproved for your mortgage.

Find the right home for you

Where do you want to live? If you’re planning on raising a family, are there good schools nearby? Are basic needs met in or near your desired neighborhoods? Can you walk to restaurants and shops? Parks? Which amenities are must-haves? Look up crime reports, property values, school reviews and nearby businesses.

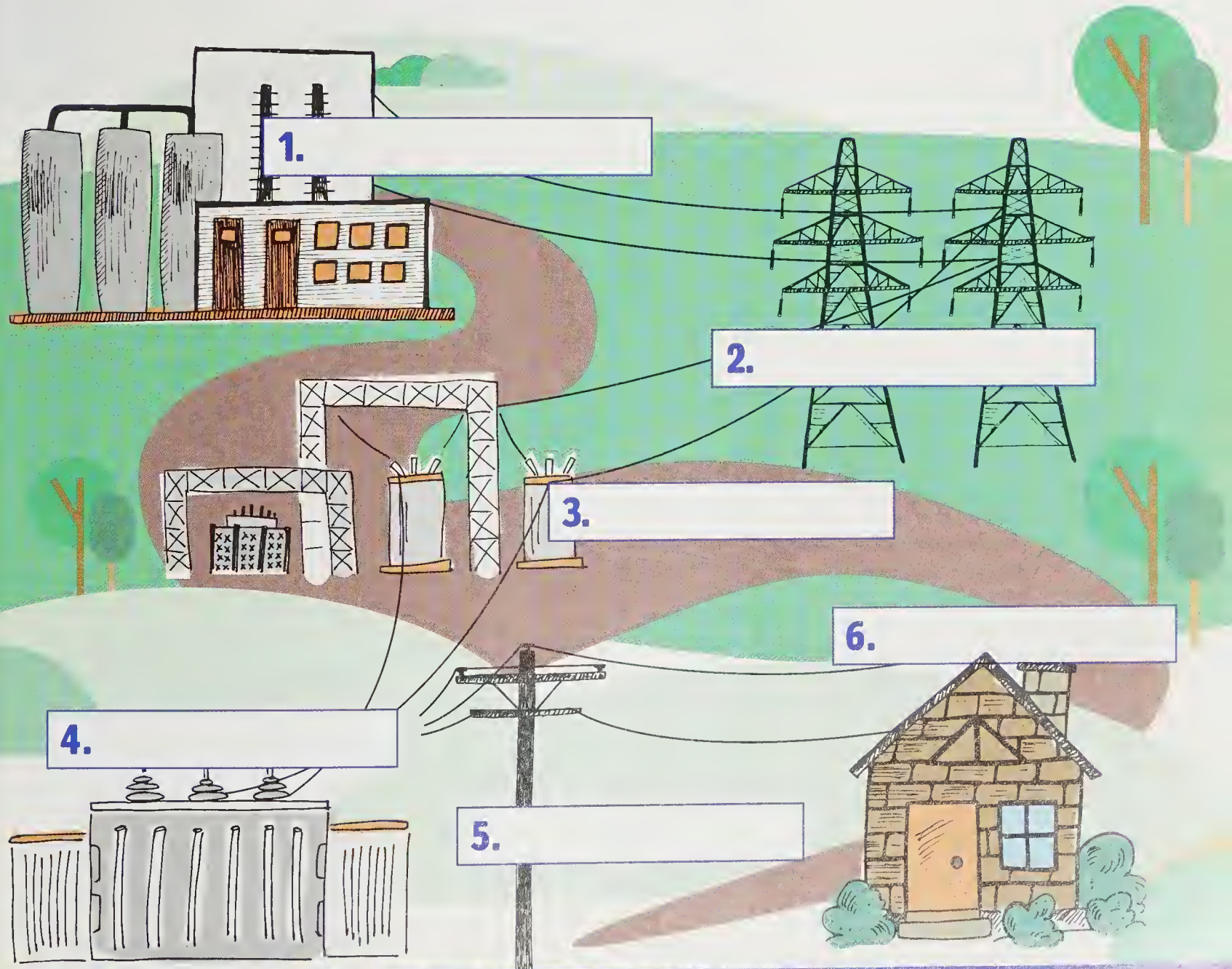
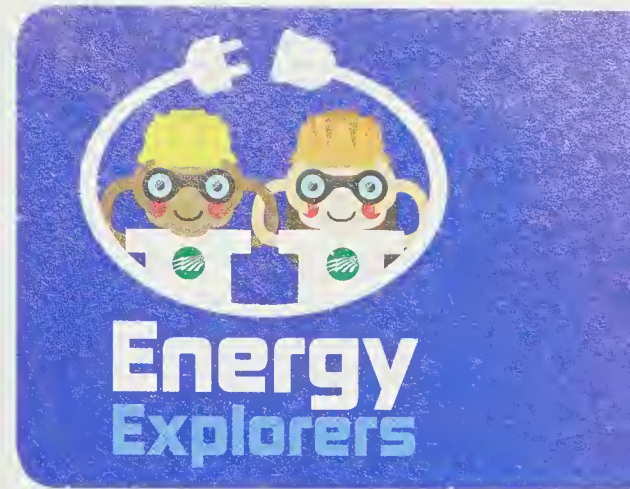
Next, find a real estate agent who specializes in your preferred neighborhood or area. His or her name should be on “for sale” signs there. He or she may even know of listings before they go on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS).

If there is a free, first-time homebuyer’s seminar near you, you may want to go. Real estate agents often run these classes, and they may have advice on mortgage lenders and homebuyer programs. **1**

Allison Goldberg writes and edits materials for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The Path of Electricity

Have you ever wondered where your electricity comes from? First, electricity is generated at a power plant. Then it travels across transmission lines (that look like tall towers) to a substation. There, transformers reduce the voltage. After the voltage is reduced to a safe level, electricity travels through distribution lines to your home!



ANSWER KEY

1. Power plants 2. Transmission lines 3. Substation 4. Transformer 5. Distribution lines 6. Home



America's Electric
Cooperatives

Carolina Country JANUARY 2014

Real recycling vs. “wishful recycling”

Americans generate about 254 million tons of trash and recycle and compost about 87 million tons of this material, which adds up to a 34.3 percent national recycling rate. Recycling and composting prevented the release of approximately 186 million metric tons of carbon dioxide in 2013, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, comparable to taking over 39 million cars off the road for a year.

Aluminum cans are recycled more than any other beverage container in the U.S., which is good for business and the environment, says the Aluminum Association, because making a can from recycled aluminum saves not only aluminum but 92 percent of the energy required to make a new can. A 2015 analysis by the Aluminum Association and the Can Manufacturers Institute determined that if all of the aluminum cans in the U.S. were recycled, we could power four million homes and save \$800 million per year. Aluminum cans are also the most valuable to recycling companies, with a value of \$1,491 per ton compared to \$385 per ton for PET plastic.

In recent years, however, recycling companies are struggling with higher processing costs, due in part to newer, larger recycling bins that don't require user sorting and thus become increasingly contaminated with garbage. When the District of Columbia replaced residents' 32-gallon bins with ones that were 50 percent larger last year, the extensive amount of non-recyclable material put into the bins drove up the city's processing cost for



Recycling companies are struggling with higher processing costs, due in part to newer, larger recycling bins that don't require user sorting and thus become increasingly contaminated with garbage.

Recycling and composting in the U.S. prevented the release of approximately 186 million metric tons of carbon dioxide in 2013.

recyclables and cut profits from selling recyclables by more than 50 percent.

“Our biggest concern and our biggest challenge today is municipal solid waste and contamination in our inbound stream,” said James Delvin, CEO of ReCommunity Recycling, which operates 31 facilities in 14 states, in an interview with Green is Good Radio. “It’s an economic issue. We go through all this effort to process this material, and roughly 15 to 20 percent of what we process ends up going back to the landfill. It’s incredibly inefficient to do that.” In a 2014 survey by the National Waste and Recycling Association, nearly one in 10 Americans admitted to throwing their waste in recycling bins when trash cans were full; one in five said they will place an item in a recycling container even if they are not completely sure it is recyclable.

“People refer to this as ‘wishful recycling,’” Delvin said. “That’s just when in doubt, put this in the bin

because there’s an outside chance they might be able to recycle it. So you see Styrofoam. You see PVC. You see batteries and those types of things.” This mixing of waste with recyclables, he says, makes it very difficult to extract the true recyclable commodities that are there that have value.

The pros and cons of recycling are heavily debated, but there’s never an argument over the environmental benefits of limiting disposable packaging and utilizing more durable reusable goods, like shopping bags, coffee thermoses and water bottles, to name a few, in daily life. **1**

EarthTalk, by Doug Moss & Roddy Scheer, Earth Action Network Inc. earthtalk.org

Resources

Aluminum Association
aluminum.org

Can Manufacturers Institute
cancentral.com

Green Is Good Radio
greenisgoodradio.com

National Waste and Recycling Association
wasterecycling.org

ReCommunity Recycling
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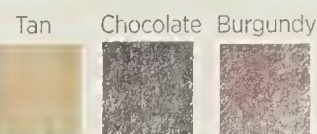
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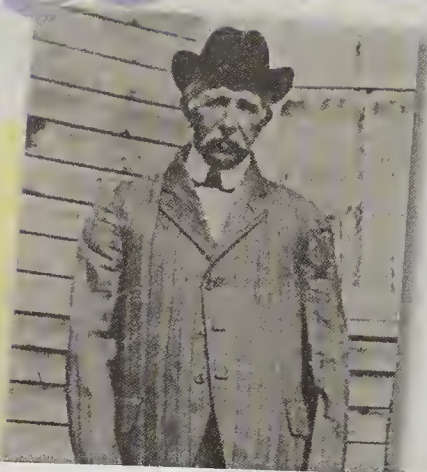
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Remember...



Grandpa Stout gave me special attention.

Grandpa Stout

Being one of seven children, I often felt like just a part of the crowd. Grandpa Stout, however, always made me feel special and loved. I am not sure why he gave me so much attention. Perhaps it was because he had only two boys and thought of me as the daughter he never had. Whatever the reason, I surely was happy to get the extra attention he gave me.

When I was around 4, he would hold me on his lap in the evenings and tell me Bible stories. He would take walks and bring me pink and blue wild morning glories, which I would proudly put in a glass of water.

On Sundays, he would take my sisters and me to church in a buggy pulled by a mule with a blanket over our knees. Going to church with him was such a treat for all of us. While there, he would lead the singing. I remember feeling very proud of him as he led us all in familiar hymns.

He passed away when he was 84. I have missed him very much, but I cherish the memories I have of him and his love.

Geneva Brown, Asheboro, Randolph EMC

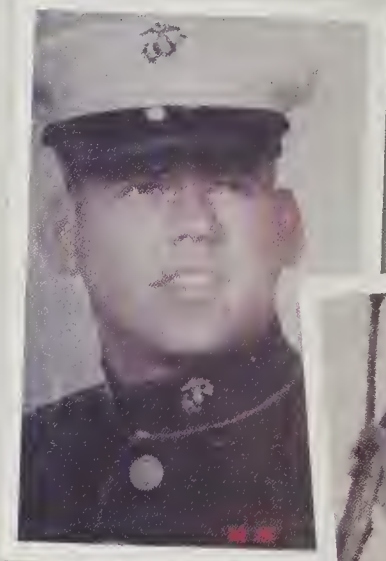
The lonely Marine

I went to California in 1964 when I was 17 years old. While there, I met a lonely, scared 18-year-old Marine headed for Viet Nam. He told me he didn't think anyone would care if he returned home or not. I let him know I would write him while he was overseas. I did write for a short while, and he wrote me back. Then the letters stopped. I didn't know what had happened to him. I was afraid he had lost his life.

I often wondered over the years what had become of this young man I had seen only twice. One day, 49 years later, I went to the Internet and found his name. Later I was given an address. I e-mailed him in Iraq. A couple of hours later he called to say he was the guy I was looking for. After chatting for about three months, we made plans for me to visit him in Texas. I stayed seven days and returned home.

He was the very sweet, kind person that I remembered. I am so glad I got to reconnect with him. While in Texas, he let me know he also had thought about me over the years and even tried to find me. He said I was the only person who wrote to him in Nam. We stay in touch with each other now.

*Kaye Deal Penley,
Connelly Springs,
Rutherford EMC*



His name is Rich Yeglic and mine is Kaye Penley. He is now 69 and I am 68.

SEND US YOUR

Memories

We'll pay \$50 for those we publish in the magazine.

Guidelines:

1. Approximately 200 words.
2. Digital photos must be at least 600kb or 1200 by 800 pixels.
3. Only one entry per household per month.
4. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want yours returned.
5. We retain reprint rights.
6. Include your name, mailing address and the name of your electric cooperative. Also, your phone number or e-mail address in case of questions.
7. Online: carolinacountry.com/contact
E-mail ("Memories" in subject line.): remember@carolinacountry.com
Or by U.S. mail: I Remember, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616



My mother wrote a letter to my brother serving in Korea, but she never mailed it.

The letter to my brother

About a year ago I found a letter in my grandparents' old family Bible. My mother, Emma Sisk, had written the letter to my brother, Lee R. Sisk, who was in the Army serving in Korea. He had been writing to Mom saying he was very homesick. Mom's letter was dated September 3, 1949.

This letter never got mailed. It stayed in the family Bible until I found it.

Mom mentions my name, Ina, in the letter, saying how excited I was about my first year in school and my grandmother's

birthday. She worked out of town then, and in her letter she told my brother that she cried often when she was away from home. She talks about us, his younger brothers and sisters, working in the cornfield, cutting the tops, and pulling and bundling the fodder for the livestock the coming winter.

Mom died three years after she wrote the letter. Our grandparents, Sudie Mae and Drayton Beheler, raised us on their farm in Bostic. When I found the letter, I felt like a child again, jumping up and down like I had found a lost toy.

After the Army, my brother resumed college at Berea, Ky., and in 1956 moved from Bostic to Griffin, Ga., where he worked at the Georgia Experiment Station for 30 years as an animal science researcher. When I sent Lee a copy of the letter, he was 85 and sick with a heart problem. He passed away about a week after he received our Mom's letter to him. His wife, Dixie, said he was so thrilled to see it, he could hardly believe what he had.

Ina Faye Sisk Bailey, Ellenboro, Rutherford EMC

Huntin' wabbits

Many parents struggle with getting their young children to eat healthy foods. Praise to those, such as my grandparents, for being understanding and creative.

I was 5 and disliked eating fruits and veggies. One of those was apple slices. My grandmother, Irene, would slice an apple into long pieces. While the adults were sitting at the table, I would hide underneath, playing Bugs Bunny, while my grandmother would be Elmer Fudd.

Elmer would try and set traps with the apples, which I pretended were carrots, of course. We would play until all my "carrots" were eaten. This meant multiple traps, and Bugs would try outwitting Elmer. My whole family played along.

If someone came over to visit and asked what was going on, the response was simple. Irene would say, "Shh! I'm huntin' wabbits," followed by the distinct Elmer Fudd giggle. I learned a great deal from her.

When there is a challenge as a parent, it's up to you how to cope or handle the situation. Sometimes, you have to dig deep into your soul for the patience and understanding it takes to be a good mother.

Elisha M. Long, Spring Lake, South River EMC

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Rocky Mount CHALLENGE

To change ROCKY to MOUNT you must
drop a letter _ _ _ _ _

change a letter _ _ _ _ _

change a letter _ _ _ _ _

add a letter _ _ _ _ _

change a letter M O U N T

(Note: each step spells a new word.)

SCRAMBLED

		S		C				E
B		D			L	R		
	A		B		D	S	M	
C		B	M		S			
S								B
			L		E	C		S
	C	E	S		A		D	
		M	R			A		C
A				M		E		

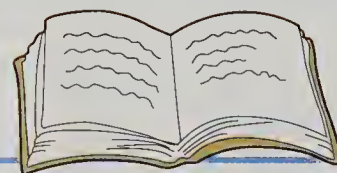
FILL IN THIS GRID SO THAT EACH ROW, EACH COLUMN, AND 3X3
SQUARE CONTAINS ALL NINE LETTERS OF SCRAMBLED (NO REPEATS).

Create an Equation

5 6 7

Using these digits
above only, can
you create an
equation on the
blanks below?
The answer is a
perfect square.

X



DAFFYNITION

Coat of armor:

A knight's strong suit

» » » » » » » » CONVERSION « « « « « « « «

Can you fill in the blanks
below to spell a word?

E D _ _ E D

R E _ _ R E

O N _ O N

D E _ _ D E

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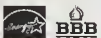
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January Events



Take the plunge and be cool at Winterfest. Held at various locations in Blowing Rock Thursday through Sunday, Jan. 28-31, the festival offers a chili cook-off, dog show, art, ice carving and parade. 828-295-7851 or blowingrockwinterfest.com

Mountains

Winterfest Parade Puppet Workshop
Jan. 4, Blowing Rock
828-295-9099
blowingrockmuseum.org

Cork & Canvas
Jan. 29, Blowing Rock
828-295-9099
blowingrockmuseum.org

Winterfest
Jan. 28-31, Blowing Rock
828-295-7851
blowingrockwinterfest.com

ONGOING

Quilling And Fine Craft Exhibition
Through Jan. 8, Valdese
828-879-2129
visitvaldese.com

Woody's Original Mountain Music
Fridays through Jan. 29, Marion
828-290-2377

Daring to Soar; The Art Of Courage
Artists interpret words of Maya Angelou
Jan., 2-30, Hiddenite
828-632-6966
hiddenitearts.org



Winterfest Parade Puppet Workshop
Jan. 4, Blowing Rock

**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

In case something changes after Carolina Country goes to press, check information from the contact listed.

Mountain Gateway Music Jam

Jan. 3-24, Old Fort
828-668-9259
mountaingatewaymuseum.org

Star Trek: The Ultimate Voyage

Jan. 24, Fayetteville
910-438-4100
crowncomplexnc.com

Vivaldi's Seasons

Jan. 28, Fayetteville
910-433-4690
fayettevillesymphony.org

Guilford Militia Encampment

Jan. 30, High Point
336-885-1859
highpointmuseum.org

Boomerang Beer & Brats Fun Run

Jan. 30, Fayetteville
910-438-4100
crowncomplexnc.com

ONGOING**Treasures of Carolina: Stories From The State Archives**

Through June 19, Raleigh
919-807-7943
ncmuseumofhistory.org

As You Like It

Jan. 7-24, Fayetteville
910-420-4383
sweetteashakespeare.com

Twelfth Night

Jan. 8-23, Fayetteville
910-420-4383
sweetteashakespeare.com

Vibrations, Frequency & Phenomenon of Relationships

Art of Vandorn Hinnant
Jan. 11-Feb. 12, Fayetteville
910-672-1571
fsuarts.com

Piedmont**Batman**

Free movie
Jan. 8, Roxboro
336-597-1709
kirbytheater.com

Bach: Brandenburg Concertos

Jan. 14, Fayetteville
910-433-4690
fayettevillesymphony.org

Keyshia Cole & Bruce Bruce

Jan. 15, Fayetteville
910-438-4100
crowncomplexnc.com

As You Like It & Twelfth Night

Twin bill performances
Jan. 17, Fayetteville
910-420-4383
sweetteashakespeare.com

Sacred Concerts

Music of Duke Ellington
Jan. 18, Fayetteville
910-672-1571
fsuarts.com

Concerts With Brian Free & Assurance And Karen Peck & New River

Jan. 23, Albemarle
704-986-3666
stanlyciviccenter.com



**Concerts With Brian Free & Assurance
And Karen Peck & New River**
Jan. 23, Albemarle

The Wiz

Musical about Dorothy in Oz
Jan. 21-Feb. 14, Fayetteville
910-323-4234
cfrt.org

Jazz Holiday

Convention Center
Jan. 15, Greenville
855-380-3257
eastcoastjazzrevue.com

Jolly Skull Beer & Wine Festival

Convention Center
Jan. 23, Greenville
252-329-4200
uptowngreenville.com

ONGOING**Art Walk**

First Friday, Elizabeth City
252-335-5330
ecncart.com

Art Walk

First Friday, Greenville
252-329-4200
uptowngreenville.com

Coast**New Year's Celebration**

Convention Center
Jan. 2, Greenville
252-329-4200
uptowngreenville.com

Shana Tucker

Singer, songwriter & cellist performs
Jan. 8, Oriental
252-617-2125
pamlicomusic.org

Liverpool Concert

Jan. 9, Swansboro
seasideartscouncil.com

NEW Carolina Compass Policy (effective Oct. 1, 2015)

- We list events in the magazine as space allows and may edit as needed. We list more events on CarolinaCountry.com in the Carolina Adventures section.
- All submissions must be made on CarolinaCountry.com in Carolina Adventures/Submit an Event. Deadlines are posted there, too. **(No email or U.S. Mail.)**
- Public venue events only. **(No business-hosted events.)**
- Limit 3 events per venue per month in the magazine. More posted online.
- For accuracy, ongoing events must be submitted monthly.
- Public contact required: website, email or phone number.

**Listing Deadlines:**

For March: Jan. 25
For April: Feb. 25

Submit Listings Online:

Visit carolinacountry.com and click "Carolina Advent." to add your event to the magazine and/or our website.



Star Trek: The Ultimate Voyage Concert Tour
Jan. 24, Fayetteville

CAROLINA COUNTRY adventures

Treasures of North Carolina

By Renee Gannon, images courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina

Treasure hunts. The term conjures images as big as pirate chests, hidden rooms and fading sepia-toned maps, as well as digging through your grandmother's attic looking for old photos, letters, diaries and documents searching for family stories not yet known.

A collaboration between the North Carolina Museum of History and the State Archives of North Carolina produced "The Treasures of Carolina: Stories from the State Archives" exhibit at the state history

museum in Raleigh. It's a showcase of unique finds in the state's attic and stories that yearned to be heard.

Sarah Koonts, state archivist and director of the Division of Archives and Records, explains that "the State Archives preserves many well-known documents, but the stories, personalities and struggles of individuals, families and groups are often revealed in everyday items such as letters, photographs, government documents and registries."

Items shown for the duration of the exhibit include World War I soldiers' oral histories, a hand-drawn map used as evidence in the 1867 murder trial of Tom Dula, documents relating the civil rights struggle and the women's suffrage movement and the oldest will known to exist in North Carolina recorded in 1665 by Mary Fortsen, unusual for its age as well as an instance of a female property owner in the 1600s. Other items include an 1839 petition for U.S. citizenship signed by the Siamese Twins Chang and Eng Bunker, who settled in Wilkes County.

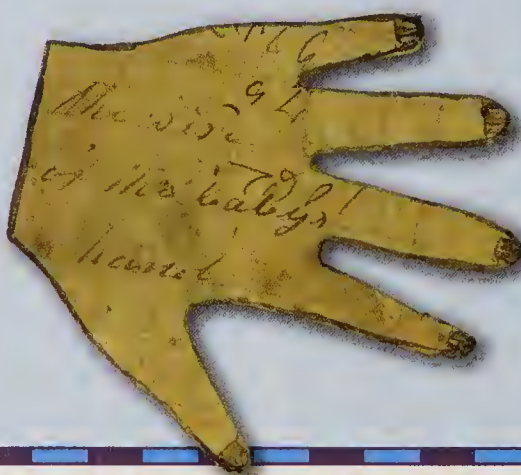


This image, labeled "Some Party," features Warren "Mac" McNeill kissing Vie, and "Joe" kissing an unidentified woman. McNeill was a Gunner's Mate Second Class from Lumberton who served on the USS Louisiana during World War I.



The 1584 map "La Florida" created under the reign of Phillip II of Spain. The map depicts North Carolina under the name "La Florida" and the Cape Fear River as "Rio Jordan."

The Civil War letter from Martha A.E. Henley Poteet to her husband, Francis Marion Poteet, who was away at war. She enclosed this cutout of her 4-week-old daughter's hand with the request, "...write to Me what to name her." The family lived in McDowell County.



Items shown on a rotating schedule include North Carolina's official copy of the Bill of Rights (stolen by a Union soldier during the Civil War and returned in 2003), the 11th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the 1663 Carolina Charter and documents featuring famous signatures.

The free exhibit runs through June 19. Visit the N.C. Museum of History website for a schedule of items on the rotation schedule. ⓘ

"Treasures of Carolina: Stories from the State Archives"

N.C. Museum of History
5 E. Edenton Street
Raleigh, NC 27699
919-807-7900
ncmuseumofhistory.org

State Archives of North Carolina
109 E. Jones St.
Raleigh, NC 27699
919-807-7310
archives.ncdcr.gov

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20595810

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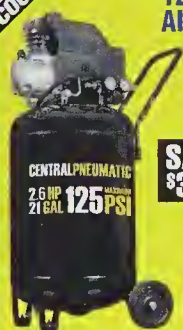
LOT 69091/67847 shown
61454/61693/62803

Customer Rating
★★★★

SAVE
\$349

\$149.99

~~\$179.99~~ comp of \$499



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68221 shown

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1500 WATT DUAL
TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN
(572°/1112°)

drillmaster

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96289 shown

SAVE
70%

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7 FT. 4" x 9 FT. 6"
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RESISTANT TARP

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69249/69129/69121/877 shown

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62496/62516
60569 shown

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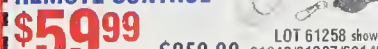
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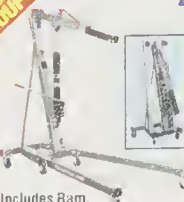
PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE
2 TON FOLDABLE
SHOP CRANE

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60388

SAVE
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Electric space heaters

How to use them efficiently in your home

When it's cold outside, it can be more cost-effective to run a space heater than turning up central heating. But if you're not careful, doing that may increase your electric bill.

Generally, it is best to run a space heater when you need to heat just one or two rooms, or if you need temporary heat in a normally unheated area like a garage or shed. If you have particularly cold-sensitive people in the house, it can be more efficient to use a space heater in the room or rooms he or she most often occupies rather than overheating the whole house.

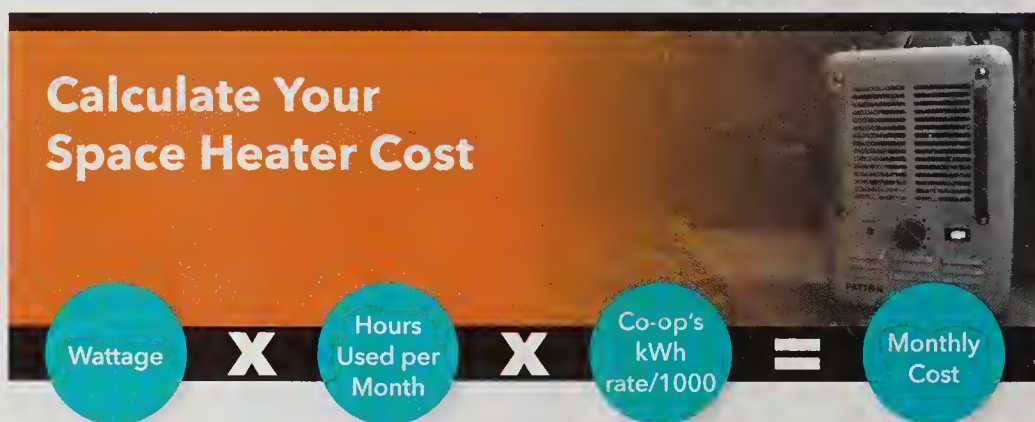
However, be mindful of the costs that these little heaters can add to your electric bill. "During an energy audit, I found three 1,500-watt heaters in the house of a co-op consumer with a high bill complaint," said Nick Rusnell, an energy advisor with HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative in Portland, Mich. "I did a cost analysis for him and he was shocked."

Do your own calculations for how much running one, two or three space heaters in your home would cost. Beware the efficiency hype around space heaters: electric space heaters are all 100 percent efficient at turning electricity into heat, but an Energy Star air-source heat pump can be 300 percent efficient.

Be savvy about use

If a space heater is right for you, here are a few tips to save energy and money:

- If you're using a space heater to heat the one or two rooms you use most, turn down your central heating so you don't heat up rooms you aren't using.
- Close doors to rooms being heated to avoid heat loss.



Most space heaters are 1500 watts. If you're operating a space heater 8 hours a day and your rate is **\$0.12 per kWh** = (1500 watts X 240 hours/month X \$0.12/kWh) / 1000 = **\$43.20/month**

- Turn off the heater when not in use or get a space heater with a timer feature.
- Purchase a heater with thermostat settings and use the lowest setting that you are comfortable with.
- Select a space heater that is the right size for the space you need to heat. Most have a sizing table on the box.

Types of heaters

Due to safety and air-quality concerns, portable propane and kerosene space heaters are not recommended for use in a home or other unventilated area. Even when installed properly, these types of heaters can emit low levels of carbon monoxide. Instead, look for an electric space heater. There are two main types:

- Infrared heaters: They radiate heat to the objects and people directly in front of them, rather than the air in the room. If you are often sitting in one place, such as at a desk, this can be a good option. Note that the surface of these heaters can get very hot.
- Convection heaters: They use convection to warm and cycle the air in a room. They are relatively quiet and can be warm to the touch, but not so hot as to burn you. Some models use fans to push the air over warm coils; these can warm a room faster, but are usually noisier. ⓘ

Patrick Keegan writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by Jan. 6 with your name, address and the name of your electric cooperative.

Online: carolinacountry.com

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
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Multiple entries from the same person will be disqualified.

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our February issue, will receive \$25. To see the answer before you get your February magazine, go to "Where Is This?" on our website carolinacountry.com.



December winner

You have to know rural Moore County to recognize Michael Gery's picture in the December magazine, and about three dozen of you from various places knew it. It's the old Snack Shop in Zion Grove on Hwy. 705 near Eagle Springs, across from the AME Zion Grove Church. Irene Davis identified it as Milton Person's snack shop. The winner chosen at random from all correct answers submitted came from James Perry of Rockingham, a member of Pee Dee EMC.



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Choosing a smart thermostat

Q: I want to replace my old thermostat with a smart thermostat. There are several choices and they are all very expensive. Which one is the best and will save the most energy?

A: To answer in a nutshell, savings cannot be guaranteed and, like choosing an automobile, you want a smart thermostat that is the best fit for your individual needs. All smart thermostats allow for Wi-Fi connectivity, which lets families set temperatures, schedules, preferences and notifications using their smartphone, tablet or computer. For example, some thermostats can be password-protected and prevent your cold-natured daughter from turning the heat up to 80 degrees when you're not looking. Smart thermostat prices typically range from \$150 to \$250 or more—though prices are expected to drop as the technology evolves.

The most well-known smart thermostats are learning thermostats like the Nest, Ecobee and Honeywell's Lyric, which learn your schedule using motion sensors and temperature preferences to figure out the best thermostat settings to keep you comfortable and save energy. These thermostat designs are simple—maybe too simple. My 88-year-old aunt wasn't pleased that her Nest thermostat would assume she was away from home when, in fact, she was knitting and lounging in her easy chair most days. The same is reported from individuals who work from home, but despite their

complaints surveys show most people would buy a Nest thermostat again.

Smart thermostats without motion sensors are offered by Honeywell, American Standard, and Trane. They look similar to standard digital thermostats—not so sexy—and, instead of learning your habits and preferences, they allow you to easily set many preferences from the thermostat touchscreen, app or website. Researching these options by reading user reviews and user manuals can help you determine what works best for your household.

When comparing thermostat models, an important factor to consider is the user interface, the appearance and functionality of the thermostat, app and website. If the interface is confusing or unreliable, you will end up with more gray hair than energy savings. Read reviews to see if people find the interface easy to control and adjust. Better yet, check out a friend's smart thermostat, app and website to see if it's something you would find easy and helpful.

Energy savings with a smart

thermostat is directly related to how simple it is for you to control and what sort of information the thermostat gives you to help make adjustments to save more energy. Research shows when energy saving settings are maintained, smart thermostats save between 8 to 15 percent of HVAC electricity use—though it varies dramatically for every household.

Smart thermostats can offer a huge benefit of being able to monitor, set and adjust temperatures while away from home or even in a different room from the thermostat. Check with your HVAC contractor or brand of equipment before purchasing a smart thermostat to ensure maximum functionality. Like automatic garage door openers, I suspect smart thermostats will soon be normal and expected in every home.

Next month we will talk about how to set your thermostat to maximize savings. **ⓘ**

Hannah McKenzie is a residential building science consultant for Advanced Energy in Raleigh. Advancedenergy.org



With Wi-Fi connectivity, smart thermostats allow families to set temperatures, schedules, preferences and notifications using their smartphones, tablets or computers.

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Toffee Poke Cake

- 1 package (18¼ ounces) chocolate cake mix
- 1 jar (17 ounces) butterscotch-caramel ice cream topping
- 1 carton (12 ounces) frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 3 Heath candy bars (1.4 ounces each), chopped

Prepare and bake cake according to package directions, using a greased 13-by-9-inch baking pan. Cool on a wire rack.

Using the handle of a wooden spoon, poke holes in cake. Pour ¼-cup caramel topping into holes. Spoon remaining caramel over cake. Top with whipped topping. Sprinkle with candy. Refrigerate for at least two hours before serving.

From Your Kitchen

Spinach & Tortellini Soup

- 1 can condensed cheddar cheese soup
- 1 cup milk
- 1 can diced tomatoes with basil, garlic and oregano
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 4 ounces cheese tortellini, prepared
- 2 ounces fresh spinach, stems removed and chopped
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder

Prepare tortellini as directed on package.

Heat condensed soup and milk in a large saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally until soup is dissolved, about 5 minutes. Add diced tomatoes, chicken broth, tortellini, spinach, red pepper and garlic. Continue to cook over medium heat until spinach has cooked down, about 10 minutes.

Warren Kessler, Carolina Country

Send Us Your Recipes

Contributors whose recipes are published will receive \$25. We retain reprint rights for all submissions. Recipes submitted are not necessarily entirely original. Include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Mail to: Carolina Country Kitchen, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 or E-mail to: Jenny.Lloyd@carolinacountry.com.



Cashew Chicken With Noodles

- 8 ounces thick rice noodles, uncooked
- ¼ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cubed
- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 6 green onions, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 cup unsalted cashews
- 2 tablespoons sweet chili sauce

Cook rice noodles according to package directions.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the soy sauce, cornstarch and garlic. Add chicken. In a large skillet, saute chicken mixture in peanut and sesame oils until no longer pink. Add onions; cook for 1 minute longer.

Drain noodles; stir into skillet. Add cashews and chili sauce and heat through.

Yield: 4 servings



Golden Chicken Potpies

- 4 cups cubed cooked chicken
- 4 cups cubed hash brown potatoes, thawed
- 1 package (16 ounces) frozen mixed vegetables, thawed and drained
- 1 can (10¼ ounces) condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 1 can (10¼ ounces) condensed cream of onion soup, undiluted
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 package (15 ounces) refrigerated pie pastry

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a large bowl, combine the first 11 ingredients. Divide between two 9-inch deep dish pie plates. Roll out pastry to fit the top of each pie. Place over filling; trim, seal and flute edges. Cut slits in top or make decorative cutouts in pastry.

Yield: 2 potpies, 6 servings each



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Recipes here are by Taste of Home magazine, unless otherwise indicated. For a sample copy, send \$2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at tasteofhome.com tasteofthesouthmagazine.com

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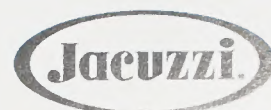
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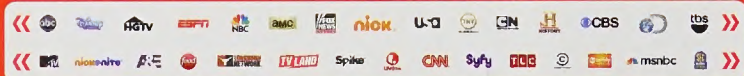
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